

Biracial Teen? Mixed-Race Teen?

Have we got some media for you!

Overview

There are many resources that can help you examine and celebrate what it means to have parents of two races. From books (memoirs, nonfiction, and fiction), to movies, blogs, and mixed-race support organizations, now is the perfect time to find out how others like yourself are defining themselves, and creating futures devoid of pigeonholes and full of possibilities...

On Paper

Non-Fiction

Black, White & Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self

By [Rebecca Walker](#)

Walker, the daughter of an African-American mother (writer Alice Walker) and a Jewish father (lawyer Mel Leventhal) writes about her memories and her struggle for identity in a society that simply cannot get enough of race and dividing people into groups. Her childhood, spent in Mississippi, San Francisco, the Bronx, and Washington, DC, forces Walker to figure out just who she is in each new venue.

Black, White, Other: Biracial Americans Talk About Race and Identity

By [Lise Funderburg](#)

Journalist Lise Funderburg interviewed 46 biracial Americans on a variety of subjects: family, love, work, religion, and self-identification. This revealing portrait of race in our society is comforting to those seeking to make sense of where they're from, where they're going, and what they're going to take on that journey.

"And never will I make a choice to conform to somebody else's idea about what my ethnicity is. I've learned too much and been through too much to be pigeonholed into somebody's narrow idea about what blackness is, what Irishness is, what being a New Yorker is."

-- from *Black, White, Other: Biracial Americans Talk About Race and Identity*

**Blended Nation:
Portraits and Interviews of Mixed-Race America**

Photographs and interviews by Mike Tauber

Featuring photographs of Americans who self-identify as being from more than one race, *Blended Nation* is a captivating portrait of these multiracial subjects. With a foreword written by NBC's Ann Curry, this book explores the voices and images of a rapidly-growing segment of the population.

"You are what they call a 'bridger.' You will be able to open
and enter doors others cannot, and then hand over hand
be able to bring them through behind you."

-- from *Blended Nation: Portraits and Interviews of Mixed-Race America*

**Bulletproof Diva:
Tales of Race, Sex, and Hair**

By Lisa C. Jones

The daughter of black poet Amiri Baraka (formerly Leroi Jones) and Jewish poet Hetty Jones, Lisa Jones creates a collection of essays about her identity struggles that are both hilarious and memorable.

**The Color of Water
A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother**

By James McBride

In this recent classic in the biracial memoir canon, James McBride tells, in alternating chapters, both his own story of growing up half-black and half-Jewish, and that of his Jewish mother's.

**The Life of Phillipa Schuyler
Composition in Black and White:
The Tragic Saga of Harlem's Biracial Prodigy**

By Kathryn Talalay

A former child piano prodigy born to a black journalist and a white mother, Phillipa Schuyler grew up in Harlem and inspired a generation of piano players. She did not have an easy relationship with her dual racial heritage, and attempted to find a home for herself in Latin America and Africa, while she became a writer of both fiction and nonfiction. Written by her daughter, *Composition in Black and White* tells the story of a remarkable woman who lived in a time when racial ambiguity was frowned upon.

**Dreams from My Father:
A Story of Race and Inheritance**

By Barack Obama

President Barack Obama, son of a white American mother from Kansas and of a black Kenyan father whom he never knew, wrote this affecting and complex memoir that examines just how artificial the constructs of race can be. He explores the communities and identities only we can create for ourselves.

**Half & Half:
Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural**

Edited by Claudine C. O'Hearn

A collection of personal essays by 18 writers of mixed heritage. At times hilarious and eloquent, these stories follow the writers as they embrace disparate cultures and struggle to find a spiritual home for themselves in the world.

**Life on the Color Line:
The True Story of a White Boy Who Discovered He Was Black**

By Gregory Howard Williams

Williams, President of the City College of New York since 2001, recounts finding out he was part black for the first time, as a teenager. His mother was white, and his father passed for white. When his mother left the family when he was 10, Williams and his brother were sent to Indiana to be with their father and his black family. An amazing story of a white teenager who was forced to live as a black one, but what was once forced upon him, he now embraces freely and with love.

**Of Many Colors:
Portraits of Multiracial Families**

Interview by Peggy Gillespie

Photographs by Gigi Kaeser

This book includes 50 photographs from an award-winning photo exhibit that celebrates the diversity that exists within 39 multiracial families. It also includes interviews with these families that explore race, love, and integration.

**Mixed:
An Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience**

Edited by Chandra Prasad

An anthology of 18 short stories written by both new and noted multiracial authors, *Mixed* explores how complex being multiracial and multicultural can be.

"We are still asked to choose between different races and cultures. Still ridiculed for our approximation of a discrete cultural blend all our own. Still not trusted because of our inability or unwillingness to readily take a side. Still hated for our belief that there is life beyond racial categories."

-- from *Mixed: An Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience*

Mixed:

My Life in Black and White

By [Angela Nissel](#)

A memoir by a writer for the TV show "Scrubs", *Mixed* is an insightful account of growing up mixed-race in Philadelphia. Nissel tackles religion, dating, prep school, and serious depression in accounts that are laugh-out-loud funny and unforgettable.

"Once I started school, my mother took on the task of helping me prepare for possible outside racist forces. She phrased her lessons like she worked for the Biracial Marketing Department. 'Being biracial is the best of both worlds! You've got two beautiful races in one package!' she'd tell me. According to my mother, a racial makeup like mine was a privilege bestowed only on a few special kids, like receiving a ten-speed bike or having a bedroom all to yourself."

-- from *Mixed: My Life in Black and White*

Multiracial Child Resource Book: Living Complex Realities

By [Maria P. P. Root and Matt Kelley](#)

An exhaustive resource guide for multiracial teens, their parents and their teachers. This book contains personal histories from a variety of multiracial teens, and also contains lists of novels, movies, and magazines of interest. Census data relating to race and racial identity is included.

What Are You?

Voices of Mixed-Race Young People

By [Pearl Fuyo Gaskins](#)

This compelling collection of poetry and essays written by 40 young adults illuminates the challenges and joys of being from and identifying with more than one racial group.

Fiction **America**

By [E. R. Frank](#)

America has been lost in the tangled social welfare system and surfaces at 16 as an angry, suicidal teen who is trying to figure out just who he is: "I'm not that little kid anymore.... I'm not white and I'm not black and I'm not anything, but I'm a little bit of everything.... I look down and it's just me." A cathartic and moving novel.

The Black Canary

By [Jane Louise Curry](#)

13-year-old James feels overprotected in his close-knit biracial American family full of professional musicians. While staying in a London apartment, he discovers a time travel portal, and ends up in Elizabethan England. Struggling with his racial identity and his secret passion for singing, James must survive in both worlds in this exciting novel.

Black Storm Comin'

By Diane Lee Wilson

It is 1860, the eve of the Civil War, and biracial Colton joins the Pony Express in order to deliver his aunt's freedom papers safely to California. An action-packed coming-of-age story filled with beauty and danger.

The Broken Bridge

By Philip Pullman

A spellbinding story of a mixed-race teenage girl growing up in a Welsh seaside village. Ginny, 16, finds out for the first time that she has a brother she didn't know about, Robert, and he comes to live with her and their white father. Ginny's Haitian-born mother, a painter, had died when Ginny was just a baby. As Ginny sifts through family memories of long ago, she struggles to reconcile all she now knows about where she came from and who her family really is.

Caucasia

By Danzy Senna

Birdie is the light-skinned teenage daughter of a black father and a white mother in 1970's Boston. When her parents split up, Birdie's mother takes her to New Hampshire where she can fit in by saying her dead father was Jewish. Birdie's darker-skinned sister, Cole, heads to Brazil with their father to find a multiracial Eden. Birdie eventually leaves the hollow lie and life she has been living to search for her sister and make her identity whole again.

The Death of Jayson Porter

By Jaime Adoff

A powerful novel featuring 16-year-old Jayson Porter and the struggles he finds living in Florida with his abusive mother and a drug-addicted father. Jayson has no control over whether or not he can fit in with his mostly-white school, but he does have control over whether he lives or dies...

The Girl Who Fell from the Sky

By Heidi W. Durrow (Feb. 2010)

Durrow's semi-autobiographical debut novel features Rachel, the daughter of a Danish mother and a black G.I. Rachel manages to survive a devastating family tragedy, and then moves to a mostly black community with her African-American grandmother. Both shunned and prized for her "exotic" looks, Rachel learns to confront her past and fashion an identity for herself that will take her into the future. Likened to Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, this novel is the winner of the Bellwether Prize for best fiction manuscript addressing issues of social justice.

The House You Pass on the Way

By Jacqueline Woodson

Already stigmatized by being half-white in her small African-American community, Staggerlee Canan also wonders about her burgeoning sexual feelings for girls. The only one she can talk to about this is her cousin, Trout, who has questions about her own sexuality, as well. A poignant exploration of identity on many levels.

Incognegro: A Graphic Mystery

By Mat Johnson

Illustrated by Warren Pleece

A gripping graphic mystery based on the long-ago activities of Walter White, the former executive secretary of the NAACP from 1931-1955. White had used his own pale skin to pass for white and investigate lynchings in the deep South. Inspired by White, Johnson and Pleece tell the similar story of Harlem journalist Zane Pinchback, whose own eyewitness reports of lynchings are regularly written up in a New York periodical under the byline "Incognegro".



-- from *Incognegro: A Graphic Mystery*

Jimi & Me

By Jaime Adoff

A novel in verse that features Keith, a 13-year-old biracial boy, and is set during the first six months after his father's death. Keith's father had been a music producer, had loved Jimi Hendrix's music, and was shot to death in Brooklyn. Broke, Keith and his mother move to Ohio to live with his aunt. Keith figures out the mystery of how his father had lost all their money, and finds another Jimi who was in his father's life.

Last Dance on Holladay Street

By Elisa Carbone

13-year-old Eva travels to Denver in 1878 after her black foster parents die. Searching for her birth mother (who turns out to be a white prostitute) catapults Eva into the hardscrabble lives that most women were subject to in the old West. Eva eventually triumphs in creating a safe life for herself in this story of a brave girl placed in an untenable situation filled with racism and sexism.

Names will Never Hurt Me

By Jaime Adoff

Tisha, a biracial girl who misses nothing, observes the tension at her high school on the one-year anniversary of a highly-publicized shooting death. The media is there, and the principal is trying to keep everything together. The novel features three other teenagers: Ryan, the untouchable football hero, Kurt the outcast who can't stand up for himself, and the power-hungry Floater. As the worlds of these four teens are set in motion to collide, it becomes clear that something big is going to happen, but to whom?

Sun Dance at Turtle Rock

By Pat Costa Viglucci

When Cody, a biracial 12-year-old boy, visits his white family in the northwest foothills of Pennsylvania, fitting in with them is hard. He does find companionship with his cousin, Clem, but a misunderstanding between the two cousins soon brings up long-held resentments, prejudice, and finally, acceptance.

Zoé

By T. A. Ford

A retelling of *Cinderella* that features Zoé Bouchard, born into a life of privilege in 17th Century France. The product of a forbidden love affair between her white father and his African mistress, all Zoé wants is to hold onto the love her father gives both her and her half-sister, Marianne. Zoé's jealous stepmother will never let this happen. When both sisters are placed into the care of a mysterious Comte in Toulouse, young Zoé enters into an affair that might very well destroy herself and everyone she loves.

On-Screen

Movies

- **"Away We Go" (2009)**
 - A pregnant biracial woman and her husband travel around the country in order to find their new "home" and a perfect place to raise their family.
- **"Bi-Racial...Not Black Damn It" (2009)**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXkPdC_a-ME
 - A documentary by Carolyn Battle Cochrane that explores the decision of biracial Americans to identify as mixed-race as opposed to just Black.
- **"The Black List Volume One" (2008) and "The Black List Volume Two" (2009)**
 - A collaboration between the portrait photographer and director Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, and the film critic and interviewer Elvis Mitchell. Both movies feature a series of portraits that capture the range of what is often called "the black experience". Several biracial Americans are featured in both documentaries.

- **Chasing Daybreak: A Film about Mixed Race in America (2006)**
 - This documentary follows five Generation MIX crew members as they travel 10,000 miles across the country in a 26-foot R.V. and spark discussions on race, mixed race, and diversity. Meeting with then Senator Barack Obama, the crew shares their hopes for the future of race in America.
- **"Crossing the Line: Multiracial Comedians" (2007)**
 - <http://www.entertainingdiversity.com/CrossingTheLine/>
 - This documentary by Professors Teja Arboleda and Darby Li Po Price explores how mixed-race comedians mediate multiracial identities and humor as they cross racial, ethnic, and cultural acceptability lines.
- **Multi-Facial (1999)**
 - A short film directed by and starring Vin Diesel about the problems that accompany an actor as he auditions, due to his multi-ethnic appearance. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YszYwOyAfw
- **"What Are You? A Dialogue on Mixed Race"**
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIHFupQm5wk>
 - Seven young women share their struggle for identity in this hour-long documentary.

Blogs

- **Light-Skinned-ed Girl** (<http://www.lightskinnededgirl.typepad.com>)
- **Lise Funderburg** (<http://www.lisefunderburg.com>)
- **Mixed Chicks Chat** (http://mixedchickschat.typepad.com/mixed_chicks_chat)
- **Mixed Messages** (<http://mxdmessages.blogspot.com>)
- **Mulatto Diaries** (<http://mulattodiaries.wordpress.com>)
- **Mulatto Mayhem** (<http://mulattomayhem.blogspot.com>)
- **Notes of a Former Mushroom-Haired Child** (<http://formermushroomhairedchild.blogspot.com>)
- **Reel Artsy** (<http://www.reelartsy.com>)

Mixed-Race Organizations

- **THE ASSOCIATION OF MULTIETHNIC AMERICANS** (<http://www.ameasite.org>)
 - AMEA is an international association of organizations dedicated to advocacy, education and collaboration on behalf of the multiethnic, multiracial and transracial adoption community.

- **INTERMIX** (http://www.intermix.org.uk/homepages/homepage_default.asp)
 - A UK organization created for the benefit of mixed-race families and individuals. Their mission is to offer a view of the mixed-race experience by highlighting icons, film, books, poetry, celebrities.
- **MAVIN FOUNDATION** (<http://www.mavinfoundation.org>)
 - A mixed-race advocacy group, based in Seattle, that has a national voice in the Multi-Racial movement.
- **MIXED CHILD** (<http://www.mixedchild.com>)
 - This site features news articles, academic studies, event information, interviews, and artist profiles that pertain to mixed-race people.
- **MULTIETHNIC EDUCATION PROGRAM** (<http://www.multiethniceducation.org>)
 - This program is part of iPride, the nations longest standing organization supporting multiracial, multiethnic, and transracially adopted youth and their families.
- **PROJECT RACE** (<http://www.projectrace.com>)
 - A group that advocates for multiracial children and adults through education, community awareness and legislation. Their main goal is for a multiracial classification on all school, employment, state, federal, local, census, and medical forms requiring racial data.
- **SWIRL** (<http://www.swirlinc.org>)
 - A national multi-ethnic organization that challenges society's notions of race through community building, education, and action.
- **THE MIXED ROOTS FILM & LITERARY FESTIVAL** (<http://www.mxroots.org>)
 - An annual free public event celebrating stories of the mixed experience through films, readings, workshops and live performances.

Film
Festivals

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BILL OF RIGHTS FOR RACIALLY MIXED PEOPLE Maria P. P. Root, PhD.

I HAVE THE RIGHT...

Not to justify my existence in this world.
Not to keep the races separate within me.
Not to be responsible for people's discomfort
with my physical ambiguity.
Not to justify my ethnic legitimacy.

I HAVE THE RIGHT...

To identify myself differently than strangers
expect me to identify.
To identify myself differently from how my
parents identify me.
To identify myself differently from my
brothers and sisters.
To identify myself differently in different situations.

I HAVE THE RIGHT...

To create a vocabulary to communicate
about being multiracial.
To change my identity over my lifetime--
and more than once.
To have loyalties and identification with more
than one group of people.
To freely choose whom I befriend and love.